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PROVISIONAL SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 11th MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Tuesday, 30 June 1992, at 3 p.m.

President:

Mr. MROZIEWICZ

(Poland)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA AND OTHER ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS (continued)

Request for inclusion of an additional item in the provisional agenda
(E/1992/90)

The PRESIDENT drew attention to a request from the United States of America contained in document E/1992/90, for the inclusion of an additional item, on post-United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) institutional arrangements, in the provisional agenda of the substantive session of 1992.

Mr. MARTIN (United Kingdom) while agreeing that a briefing by the Secretariat on the outcome of UNCED would be useful, pointed out that it could be included under an existing agenda item.

Mr. STOBY (Director, Economic and Social Council Affairs and Inter-Agency Coordination Division) suggested that the Council should follow the practice it usually applied when it was uncertain under which agenda item to consider an issue, by assigning the issue to agenda item 2 and taking it up at an appropriate point in its debate.

The PRESIDENT said that, if he heard no objection, he would take it that the Council wished to consider the question of post-UNCED institutional arrangements under agenda item 2: Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters.

It was so decided.

COORDINATION QUESTIONS

(a) Reports of the coordination bodies (A/47/16; E/1991/143; E/1992/11 and Add.1 and 2)

Mr. SPAANS (Chairman of the Committee for Programme and Coordination), introducing the report of the Committee for Programme and Coordination (CPC) on the first part of its thirty-second session (A/47/16 (part I)) and the report of the twenty-sixth Joint Meeting of CPC and the

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(Mr. Spaans)

Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC), contained in document E/1991/143, said that CPC had carefully considered the manner in which it reported to the Economic and Social Council and had concluded that the new format of the Council's meetings and the implementation of General Assembly resolution 45/264 provided an adequate framework for the consideration of its recommendations.

The problem of the timely issue of documentation had forced CPC, in 1992, to delay the first part of its session by a week; the Committee had, accordingly, recommended that the Bureau should remain in contact with the Secretariat in between sessions to ensure that documents were made available on time. It had also recommended that the draft agenda for the next session should contain a realistic timetable for internal Secretariat documentation processing.

With regard to the suggestions on the timing and duration of CPC sessions, requested by the Council in its resolution 1991/67, the Committee had concluded that the time currently allocated for its sessions was sufficient and recommended that, since it was required to report both to the Council and to the General Assembly, it should continue to meet between April and June, with a resumed session in off-budget years, and had decided to maintain the current format of its report.

On the topic of coordination, the Committee had welcomed the intention of the Secretary-General, in his capacity as Chairman of ACC, to assign high priority to coordination and had noted with gratification the further improvements made in the annual overview report of ACC (E/1992/11 and Add.1 and 2), but had again stressed the need for a more analytical and forward-looking report. The Committee looked forward to the outcome of the review of the field presence of the United Nations, currently being undertaken by the Secretary-General.

The twenty-sixth series of Joint Meetings of CPC and ACC had been held in October 1991. One topic proposed by the Meetings for discussion by the Council, eradication of poverty, was on the latter's current agenda. The Joint Meetings had discussed the implementation of the International Development Strategy for the Fourth United Nations Development Decade by the

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(Mr. Spaans)

organizations of the United Nations system. While reaffirming the validity of the goals and objectives of the Decade and recognizing that Governments bore the main responsibility for realizing those objectives, the Joint Meetings had stressed the supportive role of the United Nations system. The Meetings had called for a more effective division of labour among the organizations of the system and had recommended that ways should be found to ensure more interaction between the Bretton Woods institutions and the other organizations of the United Nations system.

The Meetings had reconfirmed the primary responsibility of recipient countries for coordinating development assistance activities at the national level and had recommended that consideration be given to combining the goals and objectives of the Strategy with those of the Declaration on International Economic Cooperation, in particular, the Revitalization of Economic Growth and Development of the Least Developed Countries.

CPC had reaffirmed the potential of the Joint Meetings as a forum for dialogue between Member States and executive heads. The next series of Joint Meetings would probably take place early in 1993. CPC particularly wished to consider the questions of the timing and topic of the twenty-seventh series of the Joint Meetings in the light of General Assembly resolution 45/264. He hoped that the exchange between members of the Council and the heads of the United Nations organizations participating in the coordination segment would provide CPC with valuable input on how future Joint Meetings should be conducted. Lastly, he drew the Council's attention to the changes proposed by CPC in paragraph 172 of its report.

Much of the Committee's time had been spent on considering the proposed revisions to the medium-term plan for the period 1992-1997. The Committee hoped that, at its resumed session, the Secretary-General would be in a position to present his views on the direction in which he would like the Organization to go, with a view to facilitating the continued review of the plan. Accordingly, while it had formulated conclusions and recommendations regarding the proposed revisions, they could be adjusted if necessary. Only five of the 10 programmes considered by the Committee had been reviewed by the relevant intergovernmental bodies. CPC believed that the consultative process

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(Mr. Spaans)

with Member States needed to be improved and it hoped that the Council would emphasize that point. The Committee had agreed to continue considering the issue of the format of the medium-term plan during its resumed session.

CPC had considered a report by the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) entitled "Reporting on the performance and results of United Nations programmes: monitoring, evaluation and management review components". With regard to that issue and to the report of the Secretary-General on programme performance of the United Nations for the biennium 1990-1991, the Committee had expressed concern that over the years, very little improvement had been achieved in providing the legislative bodies concerned with an analytical report on programme performance. CPC had recommended once again that the objectives of the organizations should be formulated much more clearly to facilitate assessment of programme implementation.

Under the agenda item on evaluation, CPC had discussed a general report on programme evaluation in the United Nations, a progress report on the in-depth evaluation of the major programme on social development and humanitarian affairs and the triennial review of the human rights programme. It had again concluded that evaluation activities should be strengthened and had proposed that the results of evaluations should be placed on the agendas of the specialized governing bodies concerned. CPC had been pleased with the refreshing frankness of the report on the triennial review of the human rights programme, in which various, sometimes conflicting views within the Secretariat had been presented.

Mr. STOBY (Director, Economic and Social Council Affairs and Inter-Agency Coordination Division), introducing the annual overview report of the Administrative Committee on Coordination for 1991 (E/1992/11 and Add.1 and 2), said that the report provided information on the action taken by ACC in 1991 to carry out the tasks assigned to it by Member States and to assist the Council in coordinating the activities of the organizations of the United Nations system. It focused on six major substantive issues: development and international economic cooperation, the impact of the recent evolution in East-West relations, African economic recovery and development, emergency and

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(Mr. Stoby)

humanitarian relief and assistance, environment and development, and operational activities for development.

ACC sought to develop an analytical approach and to identify policy options for Governments and focused attention on efforts to improve the overall coherence, cost-effectiveness and impact of operational activities for development, as well as on the difficulties facing the United Nations common system and the precarious financial situation of many of its organizations.

At the first regular session of ACC in April 1992, there had been an extensive discussion of the implications for the United Nations system of the transition process in Eastern and Central Europe and the newly independent States of the former Soviet Union and preparations for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED). The role of ACC in the follow-up tasks stemming from UNCED was widely recognized and would be discussed as one of the main agenda items at its next session. The Secretary-General was encouraged by the commitment of the members of ACC to support the efforts to improve its functioning in order to meet the new challenges facing the United Nations.

He drew attention to paragraphs 79 to 82 of document E/1992/11, which contained information on the actions taken by ACC to implement the conclusions and recommendations of the Joint Meetings. The members of both CPC and ACC had reaffirmed the importance and usefulness of the forum for dialogue between Member States and the organizations of the United Nations system in order to ensure maximum utilization of human and financial resources through enhanced coordination. Noting that the Council must determine how best to ensure complementarity between the work of the Joint Meetings and the coordination segment, he said that consideration should be given to the timing of the Joint Meetings and their role in reviewing reports on themes for the coordination segment as well as proposing themes for the segment. In that connection, he pointed out that CPC had decided to return to the questions of the timing and topic of the twenty-seventh series of the Joint Meetings at its resumed session in 1992.

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Mr. BAUDOT (Controller) said that the subsidiary bodies of the Council and the Council itself should give more in-depth consideration to the programmes and financial management of the Organization. The current situation was not at all satisfactory. Most of the programmes submitted to CPC and the Second Committee were either not considered by the subsidiary bodies or were examined only in a superficial manner. That situation should be corrected as speedily as possible. General Assembly resolution 41/213 recognized the need for Member States to participate in the budgetary preparation from its early stages. The Secretariat was currently reviewing the effectiveness of the tools at its disposal, including the programme budget and the medium-term plan. In view of the need for greater rigour in dealing with budgetary questions, it was also necessary to evaluate programmes more thoroughly to determine the extent to which they fulfilled the mandates which the Member States gave the Organization. Programme review should be an occasion for the Secretariat to re-examine its strategies and methods of work.

The current situation with regard to programme execution and evaluation was also unsatisfactory for a number of reasons. There was no procedure whereby Member States could get a clear idea of the effectiveness of the tools being used. An intellectual effort must be made in that regard before political and institutional decisions were taken by the Organization. Lastly, he stressed the close relationship between the effort by the Secretariat to review its methods of work and enhanced implementation of the policies for carrying out the mandates laid down by the Council and the General Assembly.

Mr. SUGANO (Japan) said that his delegation supported the recommendations of CPC, particularly those set forth in paragraphs 158, 159 and 160 of its report.

His delegation welcomed the efforts of ACC to undertake action on the major substantive issues to which priority had been given in 1991 and the recognition that, at a time of profound change in international relations, there was an even greater need for joint action by the United Nations system to identify and resolve the global problems facing the international community.

(Mr. Sugano, Japan)

While coordination had always been of particular importance to the Council and CPC, expectations in that regard were greater than before. The pivotal role of ACC with respect to inter-agency coordination had been underscored by the decision adopted at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) to entrust responsibility for high-level inter-agency coordination to ACC in order to ensure the effective monitoring, coordination and supervision of United Nations system efforts in follow-up activities. The thematic and integrated approach ACC was expected to take would be critical to the effective implementation of Agenda 21 and the other decisions reached at UNCED. ACC should establish a special task force for that purpose which should report to the Commission on Sustainable Development at its first meeting.

The role of the Council and CPC with regard to coordination of policy formulation and implementation should be strengthened. The establishment of coordination and high-level segments of the Council's substantive sessions should make it possible to achieve greater coordination. The work of the Council at the coordination segment would be greatly enhanced if the themes chosen by the Council were referred to CPC, which would then report back to the Council. It might also be useful to invite ACC and CPC to consider at their Joint Meetings certain topics dealt with at the coordination segment and to report thereon to the Council.

Mr. NEBENZIA (Russian Federation) stressed the need to make maximum use of the possibilities and advantages of the sectoral subdivisions in the United Nations Secretariat and the specialized agencies. In view of the scarcity of additional financial resources, it was particularly important to enhance coordination at all levels and utilize the corresponding intergovernmental and Secretariat mechanisms. Enhanced coordination was an important component of the wide-ranging political efforts to improve the work of the United Nations in general and its output for all Member States.

It would be more logical to discuss the general questions of coordination after the coordination segment. The President of the Council could prepare a brief summary based on that discussion with specific proposals for enhancing inter-agency coordination. On the basis of that summary and corresponding

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(Mr. Nebenzia, Russian Federation)

recommendations by CPC and ACC, the Secretary-General could draw up an analytical report which could be discussed at the Council's next annual session.

His delegation welcomed the policy of the Secretary-General to assign high priority to coordination and to develop new approaches for collaboration throughout the system. It was particularly important to enhance cooperation between ACC and intergovernmental mechanisms, particularly CPC and the Council. It would be useful, for example, if the Secretary-General could invite the President of the Council and the Chairman of CPC to participate in meetings of ACC.

The increased attention given in the annual overview report of ACC for 1991 (E/1992/11 and Add.1 and 2) to questions relating to the evolution of East-West relations was fully justified. ACC should continue to monitor developments in that area and should draw up corresponding recommendations for United Nations economic and social activities taking into account the new requirements of countries whose economies were in transition.

His Government viewed favourably the report of the Committee for Programme and Coordination on the first part of its thirty-second session. It was important that CPC should react promptly to delays in implementation of a number of decisions which affected the entire system. That related in particular to the recommendation by CPC concerning the need to implement expeditiously General Assembly resolutions 45/190 and 46/150 on mitigating the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster. His delegation was generally satisfied with the results of the Joint Meetings of CPC and ACC in 1991 and was prepared to participate in discussions of various proposals to enhance the work of the Joint Meetings.

Mr. ZAINUDDIN (Malaysia) said that his delegation concurred in general with most of the conclusions and recommendations contained in the report of CPC, in particular, those in paragraph 87 on regional cooperation for development in Asia and the Pacific. It was his delegation's fervent hope that those recommendations would be approved by the Council and by the General Assembly. The revised medium-term plan, once approved, should be circulated to all States Members of the United Nations for appropriate action.

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(Mr. Zainuddin, Malaysia)

CPC and ACC should continue to hold Joint Meetings. The topic for consideration should be selected ahead of time to ensure a meaningful dialogue and appropriate conclusions.

The annual overview report of ACC for 1991 did not say enough about difficulties which agencies might have faced in implementing their mandates. Future reports should be more action-oriented and analytical in nature.

His delegation agreed that improved planning was needed to ensure timely issuance of documents by the Secretariat. It also agreed that coordination should be enhanced and improved in the United Nations system, both at Headquarters and in the field. It therefore welcomed the intention of the Secretary-General, as Chairman of ACC, to assign a high priority to coordination and to work with his colleagues on that Committee to develop new approaches for collaboration. His delegation looked forward to receiving further details on those new approaches.

Mr. SHAUKAT (Pakistan), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77, said that the annual overview report of ACC (E/1992/11 and Add.1 and 2) highlighted to a considerable degree the needs of developing countries. He noted with appreciation the important coordinating role of ACC in ensuring the timely and effective provision of emergency and humanitarian relief and assistance in 1991. Profound changes were taking place in international relations, opening up new prospects for international cooperation with far-reaching implications for the United Nations system. The Organization must fully respond to the needs and aspirations of the developing countries in that context. The role of ACC had become even more important in terms of being a guiding force in promoting greater coherence throughout the United Nations system. ACC should exploit fully and in a concerted manner the various types of expertise and mandates in the system. It had a significant contribution to make in attaining the shared objective of strengthening international development cooperation for sustained and sustainable growth in the world economy and, in particular, the revitalization of economic growth and development in the developing countries.

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Mr. DJACTA (Algeria) supported the statement made by the representative of Pakistan on behalf of the Group of 77. The establishment of the coordination segment was a positive step towards improved monitoring of programmes and clear identification of areas where various priority efforts should be made at the system-wide level. The annual overview report of ACC was an important tool for coordination in that regard and dealt with substantive questions which were of interest to the entire international community and required concerted efforts by a number of bodies. The report demonstrated that ACC closely examined and monitored the areas under consideration and provided very useful information in that respect. Nevertheless, his delegation would have wished to see a clear indication of the specific measures taken in those areas and precise recommendations for future action.

The meeting rose at 4.35 p.m.